



# MARYLAND STATE & D.C. AFL-CIO

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**SB 234 - Unemployment Insurance - Work Search Requirement - Exemption for Federal Civilian Employees During a Federal Government Shutdown**  
**Senate Finance Committee**  
**March 5, 2024**

**SUPPORT**

**Donna S. Edwards**

**President**

**Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO**

Madame Chair and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of SB 234. My name is Donna S. Edwards, and I am the President of the Maryland State and District of Columbia AFL-CIO. On behalf of Maryland's 300,000 union members, I offer the following comments.

SB 234 removes the requirement that federal civilian employees who are furloughed by the Federal Government during a shutdown actively seek new employment. The unemployment insurance system in Maryland currently requires that recipients apply to new jobs in order to maintain eligibility for benefits. This work search requirement is justified as a way to get workers re-employed. Since federally furloughed workers are not receiving pay from their employer through no fault of their own and the state's goal is not to encourage these workers to leave federal employment, the work search requirement has no benefit or justification to the state's interests.

In order to meet the definition of actively looking for work, the Maryland Department of Labor requires that recipients complete "at least three valid reemployment activities each week, which must include at least one job contact."<sup>1</sup> This also requires applicants to keep records of their contacts with employers. These records are subject to audit and potential denial of benefits.

We urge the committee to issue a favorable report on SB 234.

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<sup>1</sup> Maryland Department of Unemployment Insurance Communications. "Maryland's Work Search Requirements."